



Spiritual Satsangs, Camaraderie In Piercy

In the first week of April, 15 seniors and adults from CMLA enjoyed an exclusive sadhana camp at the Krishnalaya ashram in Piercy. The camp which ran from April 2 through 6, spiritually uplifting talks and discussions with Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya Mahadevi in the serene surroundings of the Redwood forest.

Participants eagerly heard the wisdom of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and Guruji Swami Tejomayananda in video sessions and then sought greater clarity in discussions with the CMLA acharyas. In gratitude to Gurudev, the group also performed the Guru Paduka Puja. The camp also included walks amongst the Redwoods, yoga sessions and short hikes. As the sun set, the camp attendees enjoyed joke telling and friendly antakshari contests.



For the Archives ... Master Chef!

An added fun element at the seniors camp, say attendees were the cooking sessions. This time around, Swamiji played Master Chef, poring over notes and recipes and cooking up a meal that included tabouli and lasagna – all with fresh veggies and without turning on the stove! Since Patrika wasn't there, we trust the word of camp attendees, that Swamiji's cooking was finger-licking good!



Retreat for University Students on Four Yogas

BY ERIC ROBERTS

Chinmaya Mission's *Krishnalaya* ashram in Piercy, California hosted its second retreat for Humboldt State University students from during April's Easter Sunday weekend. As in the previous year, the students described it as an eye opening and beneficial experience.

The retreat was designed to offer students an introduction to the popular four paths of yoga, techniques of meditation, chanting, *yoga nidra*, and *pranayama*. The retreat, offered by the university's Religious Studies department, served as a one-credit course for attending students.

Humboldt State's Professor William Herbrechtsmeier, who teaches classes on Hinduism, and a group of almost 20 students, arrived on Friday night. After the orientation, Swami Ishwarananda introduced *karma yoga* with Powerpoint presentation that culled teachings from *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* and the Upanishads.

The next two mornings began at 6:30 with the practice of *hatha yoga*, followed by Swamiji's guided meditation, and teachings on *dhyana yoga* and *jnana yoga*. Breakfast was followed by discussions and teachings on *yoga nidra*. The afternoons were relaxing by the Eel River with Swami Ishwarananda as everyone got to know one another better.



After Swamiji's teachings on *bhakti yoga*, the students watched a video discourse by His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda on the nature of God according to the Upanishads. During evening *aarti*, prayers were sung with tabla accompaniment. A sense of inspiration was aglow throughout dinner, which was followed by a group campfire to end the day.

During the last group discussion, students reported their impressions of the retreat experience. Most common was the heightened awareness of the differences in

the state of mind from daily activities to meditation. Many students also said they identified with *karma yoga*.

The retreat was greatly benefited by the loving labor of Lalit Kapoor in the group discussions and of Mrs. Kapoor in the kitchen. The students said they were happy with the retreat and the teachings of the four yogas had made quite an impression on them. They left with smiles, finally prying themselves from Swami Ishwarananda's company, ready to recommend such partnerships to other local universities.

Badminton at Rameshwaram

Swamiji inaugurated the Chinmaya Badminton Program at Rameshwaram by cutting a ribbon and playing at the nets with Amar Reddy. The program is currently available on Saturdays 7 am to 9 am and Sundays 3 -4 pm. For more details - Amar Reddy: amark@hotmail.com



CMLA Greets Swamiji

Swamiji's birthday was celebrated by Rameshwaram families on April 29, at balavihar. Children and parents joyously sang the meaningful 'Janma Dinam Idam' with Acharya Mahadevi leading.



Ramanavami Sees Enthusiastic Participation

As each year, the Ramanavami celebrations at CMLA was a grand one that included puja, chanting, music, dance and art. It began with Nav Din Tulsi Ramayan Paath led by Swamiji and participated in by various devotees including the Devi Group. On April 1, balavihar parents marked the festival with Vishnu Laksharchana as volunteer pujari Janakiram Kuppa led the puja.

Over 100 children and their enthusiastic parents participated in the cultural show that was held on March 31. The program began in the afternoon and went on till the evening, with young children showcasing their talent in vocal and instrumental music; classical and folk dance; and skills in theater with skits on balavihar and the Ramayana. The little ones from shishu vihar and Ceep programs, stole the hearts of the audience.

The winners of the art and essay competitions were given certificates and gift cards to the CMLA book store.

The evening saw young artistes of SoCal and BV alumni render performances that were laudable. Mayuri Vasan rendered a vocal concert with the accompaniment of Karthik Vasan on mridangam and Arun Ramamoorthy on violin. There was also a Bharatanatyam dance recital by Nikki Rao.



Vishu, Tamil New Year Ushered in With Tradition

The Tamil new year and Vishu was celebrated by CMLA members in traditional style. A beautiful Vishu Kani with fruits, vegetables and grains was set up in front of a mirror, reflecting it several fold to signify abundance.

The devi puja this year was conducted by Rama Pillutla. After this, Swamiji and Mahadevi symbolically did the 'kaineetam' giving away quarters and fruits to the devotees who lined up. As each year, volunteers served a Kerala meal - of olan, kaalan, yeriseri - that brought back memories for many of their years in India.



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